

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, MT

SUBJ: NEW POLITICAL PARTY FORMED

REF: VALLETTA 0317

1. AT PRESS CONFERENCE FEB 16, DR. A.F. COLOMBO ANNOUNCED THE FORMATION OF HIS DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL PARTY (DNP). COLOMBO SAID THE REASON HE HAD DECIDED TO FORM THE PARTY WAS THE SUCCESSION OF CRISIS THAT HAVE HIT MALTA DURING THE TWO AND A HALF YEARS OF THE MINTOFF ADMINISTRATION, THE STATE OF TENSION AND FEAR THAT HAS GRIPPED THE ISLAND, THE LOWERING OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE MORALS, THE DIRECT AND INDIRECT ATTACKS ON MALTESE TRADITIONS, THE UNDERMINING OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH, AND THE GENRAL FEELING OF UNCERTAINTY, SUSPICION, AND INSECURITY THROUGH LACK OF CONFIDENCE AND TRUST BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE GOVERNED. HE ACKNOWLEDGED, HOWEVER, THAT SOME DYNAMIC ACTIONS BY GOM HAVE BEEN WIDELY AND JUSTLY APPRECIATED."

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2. THE NATIONALIST ALSO CAME UNDER FIRE FOR BEING

"SO FEEBLE AND INEPT WHILE IN POWER, SO INEFFICIENT AND IDLE ON THE OPPOSITION BENCHES TODAY, DESPITE THE YOUNG TALENTED PERSONS RECENTLY ELECTED TO THE SHADOW CABINET."

3. COLOMBO MAINTAINED THAT THE DNP IS NOT A REVIVAL OF AN OLD PARTY, NOT A BREAKAWAY MOVEMENT, BUT A NEW MIDDLE OF THE ROAD PARTY, WITH NEW CONCEPTS AND IDEAS TO REBUILD WHAT HAS BEEN LOST AND REPAIR WHAT HAS BEEN DAMAGED. HE ASSERTED THAT THE RESULTS OF A POLL OF 3,000 PERSONS, WHICH HE HAD CONDUCTED, SHOWED THAT 38 PERCENT WOULD VOTE NATIONALIST, 28 PERCENT FOR LABOR, 10 PERCENT SAID THAT BOTH PARTIES ARE ALIKE, 20 PERCENT SAID THEY WOULD NOT VOTE AT ALL AND 3 PERCENT WOULD VOTE FOR A NEW PARTY. THIS, HE SAID, SHOWED THE NEED FOR A THIRD PARTY.

4. COLOMBO SAID THAT THE DNP WOULD CORRECT THE ILLS OUTLINED IN PARA ONE AND THAT IT WOULD "AFFIRM AND DEVELOP OWN EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION, OWN TIES WITH GREAT BRITAIN, AND THE WESTERN DEMOCRACIES (AS WELL AS) ALL THE OTHERS." HE STRESSED THE DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY THE HOUSEWIFE WITH RAISING PRICES AND SHORTAGES CAUSED BY GOM POLICIES.

5. COMMENT: WHILE COLOMBO CAME OUT SWINGING TO THE LEFT AND TO THE RIGHT, HE FAILED TO NAME ANY PARTICULAR SUPPORTERS. AS THE IMPORTANCE OF INDIVIDUAL POLITICIANS UNDER THE MALTESE ELECTORAL SYSTEM IS VIRTUALLY PARAMOUNTED, THE DNP'S ELECTORAL CHANCES WILL BE MINIMAL IF HE CANNOT COME UP WITH PROMINENT POPULAR CANDIDATES. HE DID PUBLICLY SAY LOUDLY AND CLEARLY WHAT MANY ARE SAYING PRIVATELY, AND HIS BID FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE LONG SUFFERING MALTESE HOUSEWIFE WAS A SENSIBLE MOVE. COLOMBO'S ENTRY INTO THE POLITICAL LIFE OF MALTA IS A BREATH OF FRESH AIR, AND PROMISED TO MAKE MALTESE POLITICS MORE INTERESTING IN THE NEXT COUPLE OF YEARS. GETZ

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